DOCTOR WHO

season 4 special

AN ADVENTURE IN SPACE & TIME

› September 10th. 1966 - July 1st. 1967 ‹

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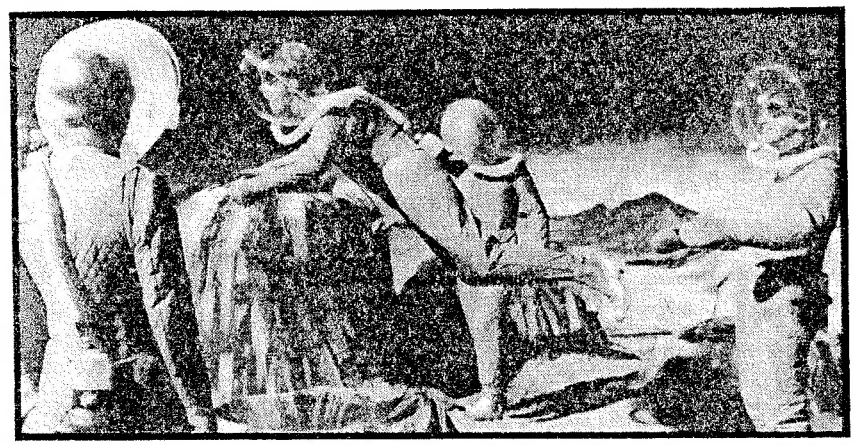
Ringing the Changes



Gary Hopkins

The fourth season of 'Doctor Who' is probably best remembered for the changeover from William Hartnell to Patrick Troughton in the title role. However, this merely symbolises the general changes of policy that were taking place at the time. Determined to put "more guts" into 'Doctor Who' producer Innes Lloyd quickly established a new line-up of characters aboard the TARDIS, phased out historical adventures and attempted - through a distinguished guest cast and higher production standards - to restore a veneer of respectability to the show. But before commenting further upon what was, it may be worth considering what might have been...

The following story-by-story re-evaluation of the fourth season of 'Doctor Who' is based largely upon facts, but with some speculation. Where possible I have acknowledged the speculation. I make no apology for the facts.

'The Tenth Planet': Originally planned as the opening story of the season, but eventually preceded by 'The Smugglers' to allow viewers to re-familiarise themselves with the scenario. Although his contract had expired, William Hartnell was retained for 'The Tenth Planet' to perform a plausible 'bridge' between himself and Patrick Troughton. Contrary to popular belief, Hartnell did not retire from acting after 'Doctor Who', and appeared in the "Cause of Death" episode of the BBC's 'Softly, Softly,' in January 1968.

'The Power of the Daleks': Unaware of who would be playing the 'new' Doctor, David Whitaker left this character undeveloped in his scripts and concentrated upon the Daleks and colonists. Dennis Spooner, commissioned in Whitaker's absence to tailor the scripts to accommodate Patrick Troughton's Doctor, recalls that: "I eliminated a lot of sub-plots. There was one very good sequence with the food machine from the original Dalek story, which was nice continuity, but the whole plot stopped for ten minutes. I just had to knock it out."

'The Highlanders': Six months after he first auditioned for a part in 'Doctor Who' Frazer Hines appeared in the minor role of piper Jamie McCrimon. His popularity with BBC executives, together with a favourable response from the public, confirmed Jamie as the new crewmember aboard the TARDIS. Sadly, it also signalled the decline of companions Ben and Polly, displaced by the arrival of the young Scot. With insufficient time to introduce his character properly, throughout the next few adventures Jamie was forced to share Ben's lines. Ironically, the part for which Frazer Hines had auditioned six months before was that of Ben.

'The Underwater Menace': Following his success with TV shows like 'Ivanhoe' (starring Roger Moore), 'The Avengers' and 'No Hiding Place' veteran screen-writer Geoffrey Orme - whose career began in 1935 - was approached to write for 'Doctor Who'. 'The Underwater Menace' quickly replaced another production which was to have been directed by Julie Smith, but which fell through at the script stage. The un-used story concerns an alien spore which is being brought to Earth aboard a passenger space-liner. Upon arrival at an Earth spaceport the spore germinates into a hostile race of plants, which terrorises the isolated community. Considered to be too similar to 'The Faceless Ones' - already well into its pre-production stage - the spaceport story was shelved. There is good reason to suppose, however, that it was also written by Geoffrey Orme.

'The Moonbase': As suggested in the review of this serial (See page "33-05") 'The Moonbase' was a straightforward re-working of 'The Tenth Planet', which probably replaced Kit Pedler's original outline for 'The Tomb of the Cybermen'. Although eight Cybermen costumes were built, they appeared together only very briefly towards the end of 'The Moonbase', thus indicating that there were plans to use them on a grander scale later in the season.

One of these Cybermen was played by a young actor named John Levine, who rose to fame in subsequent years as John Levene.

'The Macra Terror': The only major change for this serial - apart from the inclusion of Jamie - was of the Macra themselves. Ian Stuart Black's idea of "insectmen" was rejected in favour of giant crabs, thought to be less reminiscent of 'The Web Planet' (Serial "N").

At this point I have re-arranged the order in which the final two serials were transmitted to illustrate a theory. It is a fact that 'The Tomb of the Cybermen' (Serial "MM") was the last serial in the fourth recording block, held over to be shown as the first adventure of the next season; but I suspect that this was made necessary by several major changes forced upon 'Doctor Who' towards the end of the fourth season.

'The Evil of the Daleks': The review of this serial (See page "36-06") suggests that it evolved from an original non-Dalek story by David Whitaker, featuring Victorian scientists, alchemy and time-travel through mirrors; perhaps a 'Doctor Who' tribute to Lewis Carroll's 'Alice Through the Looking-glass', with Victoria as the heroine. Into this were added the Daleks, already scheduled to make their final 'Doctor Who' appearance in the same season.

Another, even more likely, interpretation is that Polly and Ben were still intended to be the Doctor's companions for this adventure, and it would have been Ben's duty to attempt the rescue of Polly, kidnapped by the Daleks. In the final version it is Jamie who rescues Victoria, thus risking his life for someone he has never seen before. Strange behaviour, even for an impetuous youngster like Jamie!

'The Faceless Ones': Submitted "on spec" to the 'Doctor Who' production office, 'The Chameleons' was the result of a chance meeting between Malcolm Hulke and David Ellis at a party. The original storyline set the action inside a big department store. The 'faceless' Chameleons have infiltrated there, taking over management and sales staff and using the store as a cover for the mass kidnapping of customers and their replacement by raw Chameleons, initially disguised as shop dummies. The hijacked customers are then frozen - like mannequins - crated up and then taken at night by spacecraft from the roof of the store up to a space station orbitting the Earth. Two major rewrites were required for this adventure. The first was to transplant all the action to Gatwick Airport, considered to be a more exciting location than a department store.

The second rewrite was to eliminate Ben and Polly from the body of the script, and to develop the characters of Jamie and Samantha, the two companions who would afterwards have featured in the re-scheduled adventure 'The Tomb of the Cybermen'. Ben and Polly, already destined to leave at the end of 'The Faceless Ones' - the last adventure of the season - were originally included in all six episodes. Innes Lloyd's wish to be rid of them as soon as possible ensured that their departure was less than dignified.

In the event, plans for Samantha Briggs fell through (See 'The Faceless Ones', page "35-06"), 'The Evil of the Daleks' was re-scheduled as the last story of the season and the character of Victoria hurriedly introduced to be the new female companion.

Change dictated the development of the fourth season of 'Doctor Who', not least in the character of the Doctor himself (See page "35-05"); and although much of the above is open to debate, it demonstrates at the very least that what doesn't reach the screen is almost as interesting as what does.

SPACE & TIME

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Distribution.....'CyberMark Services'
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SPACE & TIME

Old Hands, New Faces

Tim Robins

'Doctor Who' had settled into a quiet rut. In an effort to make it unnecessarily trendy a number of gaudy companions were introduced, starting with Dodo. This trendy approach failed, revealed as the superficial gloss it was. However, a number of more significant changes stuck. Most significant was that, with a concentration on action, the companions were stretched in a form of television shorthand. Rather than the apparently mundane, yet personally compelling schoolteachers viewers were now given a sailor, a trendy young thing, a Scot (you could tell by the kilt) and a young Victorian - just missing a loud-mouthed Liver Bird on the way. In short, gimmicks replaced characterisation.

In fact, Ben (Hello, sailor) and (pretty) Polly were given quite a strong origin, stronger than the tired Dodo, the trite Steven and the frankly terrible Vicki. Basically, this was because, unlike previous companions who had all (Steven excepted) been stand-ins for Susan, Ben and Polly were replacements for Ian and Barbara. The time for teenage girls trying to hide their rapidly developing breasts was past. Ben and Polly were given a fairly believable start with 'The War Machines', which at least provided a common origin and some reason to develop an enduring friendship.

Ben, on the whole, succeeded, partly because writers ignored the character outline provided which called for quips about his being a sailor. Polly, after a reasonably strong start - virtually re-enacting Barbara's role in 'The Power of the Daleks' - slid into a quagmire of screaming hysteria to become what is now known as a "female companion". All the upbeat clothes in world couldn't help her.

Ben and Polly did prove popular companions; too popular for their own good. Perhaps regarding themselves as old hands compared to the new Doctor, Anneke Wills and Michael Craze's plans for stardom clashed with Innes Lloyd's. The result was Frazer Hines and Deborah Watling.

The departure of Ben and Polly was evidently planned as far back as 'The Highlanders'. Frazer Hines was a spur of the moment addition, which accounts for his nondescript role in the story. But his rapid introduction meant that Jamie took an unusually long time to be successfully worked into the series, only achieving some semblance of a personality in 'The Faceless Ones'. Ben's pairing with Jamie was not the happiest of times and resulted in a disastrous sharing out of lines between various members of the cast and violent fluctuations in character.

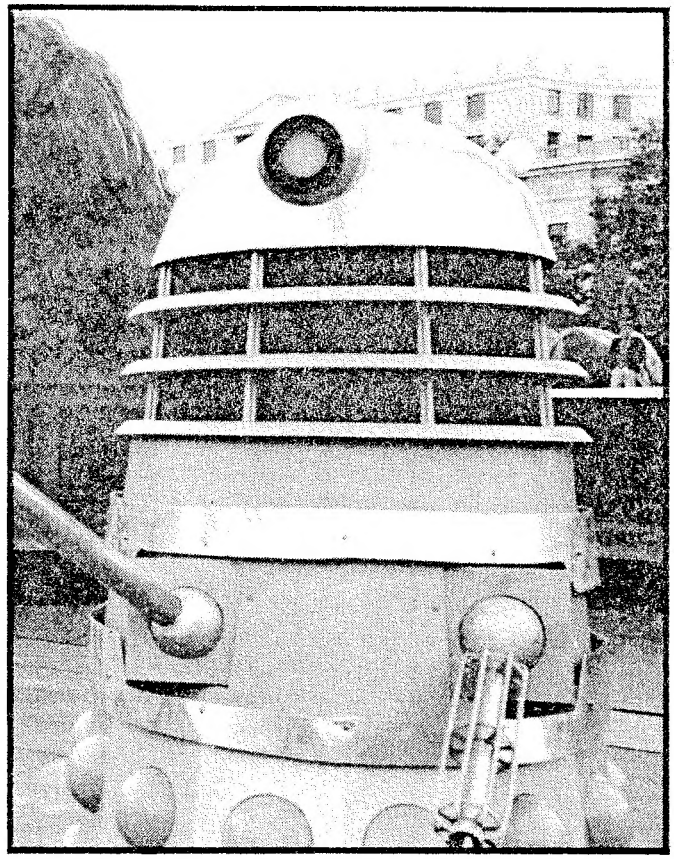
Interestingly, the second new Troughton companion was also from Earth's past. Although seen only briefly in 'The Evil of the Daleks', Victoria was another happy addition. Her youthful, somewhat chaste and closetted Victorian lifestyle provided a better rationale for her frequent tearful relapses than Polly's. Presented as an all-too-sophisticated companion, Polly won no sympathy from anyone for her ghastly bouts of maudlin hysterics.

A seemingly unlikely partnership, Jamie and Victoria were remarkably successful. They both shared a fresh-faced, endearing charm which, coupled with their often incongruous appearances and historical background, seemed to create a common bond. Both being somewhat naive they also proved the perfect foils for Troughton to manipulate.

It's difficult in retrospect, however, not to see Jamie and Victoria as a simple refinement of gimmicks, rather than a return to the realistic character development with which 'Doctor Who' began.

The Film-making of Doctor Who 1963 - 67

Jeremy Bentham



'Doctor Who' is first and foremost a video-taped series. That is to say, it is put together in an electronic studio with all the material likely to be seen by the viewer being transferred there and then onto two-inch master video-tape.

There exists within 'Doctor Who's framework, however, a facility for almost every serial to have some inserts made on film. Film offers the director greater flexibility and control over his work by providing quick and easy editing, small cameras which may be positioned into more interesting angles than the pedestal electronic cameras, and the curious "soft" quality to the finished picture that somehow looks more "real" to an audience than the harsh and very sharp eye of the video camera.

The penalty to be paid for such advantages, though, is one of cost. Even in black and white film is expensive and cannot, like master tape, be re-used. Thus, while 'Doctor Who' has always made use of film it is not a fully-filmed series like 'The Saint', 'Danger Man' and 'The Avengers'.

The directors of 'Doctor Who' in the Sixties used film to overcome two aspects of its production. The first was the obvious aspect of exterior location filming. Shooting on location using O.B. equipment (outside broadcast video cameras) was in its infancy between 1963 and 1969, and so all location and exterior work had to be done on film, using, in the main, 16mm Mitchell film cameras. Only on rare occasions, such as 'The Highlanders', was expensive 35mm film equipment ever used.

Mounting a major location shoot for 'Doctor Who' was not a venture to be undertaken lightly. Aside from the angle of cost the week-long filming could wind up pushing back a week from 'Doctor Who's very tight studio dates. In that event the gap between production date and transmission date decreased, thereby removing some of the contingency time needed in case of catastrophes, such as strikes.

During William Hartnell's time as the Doctor only three large-scale location shoots were scheduled: 'The Dalek Invasion of Earth', 'The Smugglers' and 'The War Machines'. Two others, 'The Savages' and 'The Myth Makers' had some location filming, but both sessions lasted only a day and both were on sites requiring little pre-planning. 'The Smugglers' was the one story needing a full week-long shoot, complete with special props, costumes and make-up, plus technical super-numeraries like carpenters and prop movers.

Production Assistant John Hobbs was nominally in charge of scouting out the locations for this story, but most of the groundwork normally required for such a project was unnecessary thanks to Innes Lloyd's choice of Julia Smith as director. Julia Smith had worked quite extensively in the West Country and so knew most of the locations she wanted to use. John Hobbs' tasks therefore fell mainly into the categories of visiting the locations to request permission to use them, and of planning the Filming Diary.

Film Diaries are vital documents in that they spell out each day the film crew will be active, where that crew will be active, who will comprise that crew, what resources they will need, what cast will be required, where cast and crew alike will be staying if accommodation is necessary, where they will eat during the working day, any other outside facilities required (e.g., coastguard support), contact points in cases of emergency (ambulances, doctors, etc.), parking facilities both at the accommodation and at the location site, a detailed road map of how to get there, and the all-important list of what scenes will be shot on which day and at which location.

For a big location shoot, such as 'The Smugglers', the Film Diary can be upwards of 30-pages thick, with copies sent out to over forty BBC offices and departments, plus artists' agencies and, in some cases, direct to the artists themselves.

The week-long schedule for 'The Smugglers' was authorised by Innes Lloyd who knew the story was the last one going into production for that year's "block", therefore he felt the production/transmission gap could be allowably truncated by one week to cater for the exterior filming.

Long before the first BBC van left London, designer Richard Hunt had visited all the location sites and made copious measurements, sketches and photographs. Onto his shoulders fell the responsibility of pre-fabricating, back in London, all the special props and dressings needed to transform the 20th Century into the 17th Century. A good example of re-dressing was Jacob Kewper's inn. No existing tavern was thought suitable due mainly to the size of the windows, all of which were too large to suggest 17th Century buildings. Hence the special fake windows and the inn sign which would dress a conventional stone barn building were constructed before the technical teams left for the West Country.

In the early hours of Sunday morning a large van left London loaded down with all the special props, costumes, lights and back-up equipment needed for 'The Smugglers' location shooting. Not far behind drove the estate cars containing the delicate film camera and sound recording equipment. Arriving at Penzance sometime in the early afternoon the crew, all under the direction of the designer, set about beginning the transformation of their first location. One room at the hotel became the costume store, while another was taken by the make-up supervisor. A lot of time could be saved if dressing and primary make-up could be done at the hotel the morning before a shoot.

The next morning the cast and the director arrived, all having travelled down either by BBC transport or using their own vehicles; and all, like the crew the day before, working on overtime rates.

Official location hours are nine o'clock till five, after which overtime once more comes into play. Thus the onus is on the director to get as much done in the eight hours (one hour provided for lunch) allocated. By that first afternoon one location would be ready for filming, with the prop men, carpenters, etc., on their way to location two to start the transformations there. For a multiple location shoot the support crew always works one day ahead of the production unit.

With only one film camera available each scene would have to be shot several times over. This was firstly to cater for unexpected problems - a fault on the film, a less than perfect aperture setting, or even the unnoticed appearance of an aircraft in the distant skyline. Secondly, by shooting each scene from different angles and with varying close ups and distance shots it would make the finished, edited-together film more interesting to watch. No matter how good the script, a five minute sequence of the central characters trudging across the shore with the camera slowly panning left to right would bore an audience to tears!

In almost every 'Doctor Who' instance sound is recorded in conjunction with the filming. The synch being performed by the ages-old technique of the clapperboard. The only other method of adding sound to film - post-dubbing - was both costly in dubbing theatre hire charges, and time-consuming.

At the end of each day's filming the used cans of film would be rushed to the nearest technical laboratory for processing. The "rushes" would then be ready the next morning for the director to view on a 16mm film projector in the hotel to check that a critical scene had no faults on it.

By five o'clock on the Wednesday the final shooting would hopefully have been performed, leaving the production unit and cast free to return to London - again on overtime. The technical crew would leave the next day if any major set undressing needed to be done. Once back in London the cast and production team would have no chance to rest. The very next day they would be required in rehearsal, acting out the lines they had learned during the evenings of their location stays. And the day after that, a Friday, it would be time to record a full episode in costume at Lime Grove or Riverside. Little wonder many of the people working on 'Doctor Who' in the Sixties referred to it as a never-ending treadmill process!

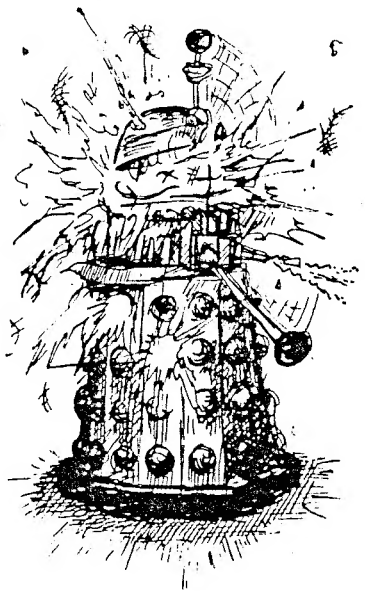
The other aspect of 'Doctor Who's production solved by the use of film was controllability over special sequences. This could be a delicately-timed model shot, a choreographed fight scene, or a sequence involving "element" effects, e.g., water, fire, wind or explosions. For such scenes the facilities of the BBC's own film studios at Ealing were employed.

To the producer and director of a 'Doctor Who' serial a day spent at Ealing counted as a day spent on location, with exactly the same rules and schedules applying, right from the drafting of the Film Diary down to the striking of the finished sets.

Many BBC productions make use of Ealing and so whenever an "indoors" film shoot is required for 'Doctor Who' the first point of contact is between the producer and director and Ealing management. A Film Manager is then appointed to a production to liaise with the director in the allocation of a studio and whatever resources are required. For Julia Smith's second 'Doctor Who', 'The Underwater Menace', the full facilities of Ealing's water tank were needed, complete with a crew trained in the filling and emptying of the tank.

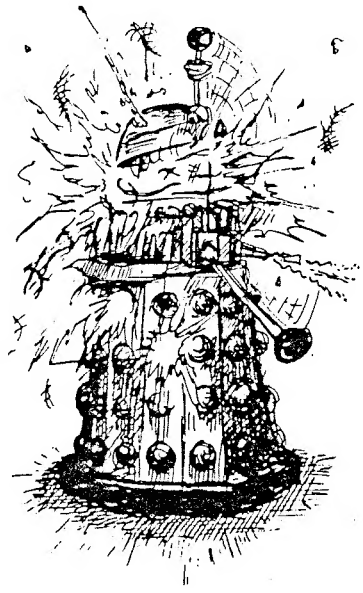
Completed film for a story is edited into a series of "telecine inserts", each one bearing a unique number. TK 1, for example, might be a short single shot of a burning torch being hurled through the air; TK 2, by contrast, might be a complete ten-minute reel comprising dozens of shots and several scenes.

On the day a 'Doctor Who' episode is recorded in the electronic studio one camera will be trained on a screen, onto which the telecine reel will be projected. Each sequence of telecine will be preceded by a set of countdown symbols. Once the film starts rolling the director and his team in the control-room know they have ten seconds to go before they can mix to the camera recording the telecine. By then all activity on the studio floor must have finished, and the next studio scene must be ready to begin once the telecine sequence has finished being added to the two-inch master reel. The process requires split-second timing in a continuous recording environment, and to the credit of all concerned in the Sixties, they never once made a mistake.



A Nation of Daleks

Tim Robins



The Daleks simultaneously endangered 'Doctor Who' and saved it. The expense of 'The Daleks' (Serial "B") raised eyebrows at the BBC, yet its very popularity ensured healthy ratings and the show's continuation. Since that serial an entire mythology has been created, largely by David Whitaker, so that today the erstwhile Dalek historian must consider comic strips, annuals, films and even plays as part of a Dalek continuity which existed apart from 'Doctor Who' itself.

'The Evil of the Daleks' provides an interesting example of continuity. Viewers might have been surprised at the eventual appearance of the Emperor Dalek, particularly if they had seen the many stories featuring the golden spheroid version in 'TV21' comic and colouring books. However, readers of the 'Dalek Outer Space Book' might not have been so surprised. A story entitled 'The Emperor's Secret' tells how the Golden Emperor, in an effort to 'improve' his efficiency, is rebuilt as a stationary control unit in the great hall of the Daleks. Standing with many service tubes feeding the outer casing, it resembles the on-screen Emperor (with a little stretch of the imagination). The same book also contains stories featuring Sara Kingdom.

It was, in fact, in the 'TV21' comics that Dalek fans first saw Daleks trundling off a conveyor-belt, and a Dalek revolt. Another link between 'The Evil of the Daleks' and the comic-book versions is the alchemy sub-plot. On screen the Daleks' modus operandi was, after all, the subjugation of humanoids using 'human traitors'. In the comics the Daleks spent a lot of time searching for precious metals and gems.

David Whitaker's characterisation of the Daleks is subtly different to Terry Nation's. Nation's was the more cinematic view. Like the James Bond films he relied on increasing the spectacular to sustain dwindling plots - the "bet-you-haven't-seen-this-before" attitude, which a growingly economy-minded BBC could not sustain.

Whitaker was quite happy with two sets and a food machine. Dennis Spooner recalls the drastic pruning 'The Power of the Daleks' needed, as Whitaker could revolve whole scenes around two characters debating the merits of a waste-paper basket!

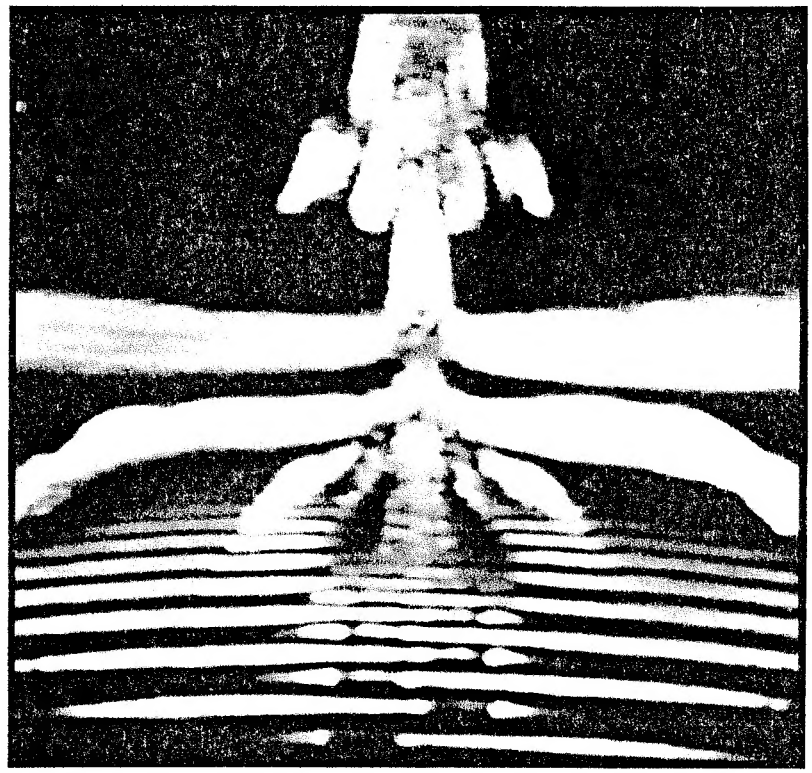
Each Dalek writer had his own distinctive style. Nation's scripts were sparsely written with plenty of action, Spooner's with plenty of plot twists. It is Whitaker, however, whom I always associate with the Hartnell era. To him 'Doctor Who' was a children's programme first and foremost. His sense of child-like wonder is often embarrassingly matched by a total incomprehension of the paradoxes of space and time. Evident in the potted history of the universe in 'Beyond the Sun', it came to fruition in his Dalek work. Only he could have written that the Daleks gave humans measles, or that Skaro was several universes away. For Nation the seventh galaxy was enough.

Much of the Daleks' continuity was probably an accident, a result of re-using concepts. Terry Nation was particularly obsessed with mining and the betrayal of humanity by humanity. Even features such as ice-canoes were not to be seen on the screen for many years.

Whitaker and Nation together created a believable mythos for the Daleks - more believable than the somewhat contrived Cybertechnology of the Cybermen. The writers even rewrote the Daleks' confrontation with the Mechanoids in the 'Dalek World' book - minus the Doctor. Indeed, it is in the comic strips and annuals that Nation's vision of the Daleks is most fully realised - a foretaste of his planned American series.

A Graphics Display

Jeremy Bentham



Innes Lloyd's wish to re-vamp 'Doctor Who' took place around the close of 'The Macra Terror' and the dawn of 'The Faceless Ones'. With the re-introduction of six-part stories aportioning more budget to a show, the "upgrading" was further emphasised by a complete change of title music and title graphics.

Delia Derbyshire of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop undertook the re-arrangement of the 'Doctor Who' theme. Her brief was to maintain the original "melody" composed by Ron Grainer, but to have it suggest more of Troughton's clownish personality than Hartnell's sombre character. This she achieved by introducing into the theme an underscore of continually ascending tones. Coupled with a more up-tempo arrangement of the main theme, minus Brian Hodgson's "swishes" of white sound, the theme achieved its desired bouncier air. Unlike the original theme, however, the music did not match intrinsically with the new opening graphics.

The graphics were undertaken by Bernard Lodge of the BBC's Graphics Department. On the first serial the idea of the title film being built up from overlapping sequences of "visual howlaround" (a video camera looking down its own monitor, and thus shooting its own electronic feedback) had come from the then Associate Producer Mervyn Pinfield. Bernard Lodge saw no reason to change this fundamental principle, but felt that where the titles succeeded best was in the suggestion of travelling through a "time corridor". Hence, for the Troughton graphics he only selected "howlaround" shots that gave the impression of a rapid voyage down an impossibly dimensioned time tunnel.

Continuing this idea he wanted the face of the Doctor to be seen zooming out of infinity, towards the camera, splitting up as it "passed by", showing behind it the name 'Doctor Who', which then broke up and faded away into infinity. This was the hardest part of the job. The title logo 'Doctor Who', which then produced multiple images of itself - alternating between images saying 'Doctor Who' and 'ohW rotcoD' - was done as a separate piece of film using a rostrum camera. That piece of film was then transferred as a picture to a monitor being seen by a camera. Electronically overlaid on top of that picture, thus masking it out, was the photograph of Patrick Troughton which, as a sequence, faded in and then zoomed towards the camera. At a precisely timed moment that image was electronically "dissolved", giving way to the title logo "behind" it, which then ran through its multiple exposure routine before fading out. When these images were fed into the background tunnel effects they resulted in the titles as seen on television.